



CURIOUS OAK TREE AT BADEN-BADEN.—SEE PAGE 38.

CURIOUS OAK-TREE AT BADEN-BADEN.

THE outline sketch on page 36 may interest arboriculturists and foresters. It represents two branches of an oak-tree, which, reuniting above, again forms one single trunk, as undivided and complete as at the base. Nature, and not art, has produced this junction. The tree was, for the first time, observed, in 1818, by woodcutters in the Kaiserswald (now Mahlbergwald), Grand Duchy of Baden. Being considered a great curiosity, this portion of the tree was cut off and fixed in a part of the grounds surrounding Mahlberg Schloss, a late residence of the Grand Ducal family, and built on the foundations of a Roman fortress.

The circumference of the trunk, where it was cut, is at present, after having been barked and smoothed by the axe, four feet six inches; its height above ground is eight feet nine inches, and the width of the space between the branches four feet nine inches.

Between the branches is seen the village of Orschweier; beyond are the vinebearing hills of the Kaiserstuhl; and more distant still, on the right, the mountains of the Vosges in France; the Rhine flowing between these two ranges.

A MODERN BOAR HUNT IN BAVARIA.



ATTENDERS of the chase are come to rather tame pass in our day. Daring has given place to dodging in this as in so many other things, and the cunning of the arm with the spear has become supplanted by the cunning of the eye with the rifle.

Thanks to the genius of a Snyder, we can more than imagine the boar hunt of former times, otherwise the powers of fancy might have stretched in vain from our present mode of giving such a brute the quietus to that period when, in his gnashing fury, a course was rent through besetting assailants, or a breathing-space secured by strewing the ground with their mangled bodies.

Let us start, then, at Aschaffenberg—the Fontainebleau of his Bavarian Majesty—and even speak of the warning injunctions our Frankfort host gave about the great forest that lay in our way.

On we went, and at last—oh, welcome sound!—the barking of a dog proclaimed man's dwelling-place, and then the glimmering of a light created quite a glow of satisfaction within me. It was the half-way inn of which I had been told, and for which I had been looking out most longingly.

In the morning I found the party reinforced, and some large hounds made their appearance in coupling-chains, whilst schnapps was going the rounds, and, the better to enlist the stalwart band, I directed an additional round to be served out on my account.

Many roguish, rough-looking attendants were also lounging about and sipping the early dram; for, though not of a very gentle order themselves, these Jägers formed a class of superiors, as the doffed hat and abashed look of these their serving-men plainly told. The dress of this Jäger corps, though varying in some instances, was of dark-gray, faced with green, tunic form, and caught in at the waist with a girdle, from which hung the trenchant *couteau de chasse*. Most of them wore small felt hats of dark-green, fitting closely, and with a tuft of black feathers in the band. Some had whistles made of the boar's tusk, and I observed one with a boar's scone in brass on his shoulders, from which distinction I set him down as a sort of head-keeper or lieutenant of the force. But what struck me most in this really fine body of rangers was the enormous mustache nearly every one exhibited.

The chief Nimrod made his appearance at a point about an hour's walk off, where there was a large ring of lofty beeches, with such a gateway as, no doubt, led to some woodland château. His party mustered about half a dozen, and, though I could see they were all men of rank, there was nothing that denoted style or superiority.

There was a score of good rifles at least, besides a respectable contingent of muskets, and, as nearly all carried the *couteau de chasse* as well, I thought the turnout must have little in it, or the boar be, of a truth, a very curious customer, if we came to grief.

After a short chat, and a cursory survey of arms and appliances, the force broke up into detachments, and certain instructions were given to each petty leader as they moved off one after the other for their respective beats, or, as I concluded, to form so many segments in the great starting circle. Each party also took off its contingent of followers, and, my eye being on my old friend, he beckoned me as his own particular recruit, and I fell in and followed a portion of his company. I began, however, to review the matter in my own mind *de nouveau*; and, certes, the chance of an awkward rip did not appear quite so remote, under this detailed order of movement, as if it had been *en gros*.

But I was now in for it, and, "being in," you know what Shakespeare says about getting out, though, as guidance for others, I would just here recommend a traveler to keep his onward path, and not volunteer into strange service, or get into positions which may lead either to danger or difficulty.

The mast and dead leaves became drifted into such dells and hollows as the ground offered, and, with a crisp covering of snow, we very soon found ourselves ploughing our own path knee-deep, and with a gentle intimation that the animals might turn up at any moment.

Indeed, my own especial corporal gave me a nod to this effect, and was just adding, "Now we hit on something," when a sonorous "Guff!" that would have startled the seven sleepers, broke on my ear, and beneath a kick-up of leaves and snow I beheld a snout and grizzly mane, cutting along at a furious rate in the foreground. "Bang!" went my old friend's rifle. "Guff! guff!" A bang left and another right were followed by a loud "Guffee!" and, in the next minute, one of the Jägers was drawing the dead animal our way, with a short bit of stick passed through the snout, and a trail of blood in the rear. It was a sow of about two years old, with but little of the formidable, and not much of anything else that I could see save bristles and a loose, flabby carcass—hideous, however, withal—and such a strange disproportion of head, and so malignant the grin even in death, that it hardly looked like any earthly creature.

They are of a dingy iron-gray, these wild swine, inclining to rust-color about the belly and the inner side of the legs, but there is a pricking up of the bridge of the snout caused by the tusks, which gives them a most diabolical expression of ferocity, and their coating stands out sharp as wire, and shows shaggy as they lie upon the snow.

We now heard the rifles cracking away in more than one direction, so that the forest forces were beginning to concentrate; and, from a little variation in the "guff" notes, the grunters were evidently becoming alive to their position, and whatever the other parties to these presents might feel, I, on my own part and behalf, began to entertain certain feelings of anxiety about the probable upshot of these boorish battle-notes when the full herd got into grand chorus, and were driven to a last desperate stand. Nor was my concern any less for the assurance that we had two or three first-rate boars in the circle, and might look forward to a smart battue.

The plot was certainly thickening, and its dénouement not far off, since the converging powers were making their progress

distinctly audible, and the lesser fauna began to squib about in our front as though the ends of the earth were coming together.

There appeared also a blank in the circle, one segment short of the round, but I could hear its approach; and, from a show of activity in that quarter, the leading actors were doubtless about to make their *début* there. And so it proved, and so the ring became complete, the entire force presenting about fifty men armed, who took up ground at about the same number of paces from each other, whilst attendants, followers, and a few straggling fools like myself might count a hundred. These showed front in the rear, and between the intervals; though, for my part, I made up my mind to show no front at all if it came to anything serious, since, with my equipment, I might as well maintain front before Beelzebub with a bulrush in my hand. Most of the other secondaries bore some sort of weapon, and one near me held an axe over his shoulder, and was evidently a woodman.

I had from my very boyhood a horror, and I may say a mortal fear, of the whole hog species, and would at any time sooner confront a lion or tiger than a savage boar of even the ordinary kind; and yet, here was I forming a stop-gap before a whole herd of the wildest and most ferocious class.

Preparatory to action there was, of course, a round of schnapps—nothing in the way of venture being done in Germany without this whet—and though I came quite unprovided, my old friend was true to me in my extremity, and never came a whet of *Kimmel* more timely to my lips. He moreover took the opportunity of giving me a little final instruction, and pointedly dwelt on the worst, by saying:

"Now mind you bear to my left if there be any dash through on the right, and the reverse, you understand, if menaced from the opposite side;" an injunction which I promised strictly to obey, and, involving the precise line of conduct I had already hit on in my own mind, he might assuredly count on its most scrupulous fulfillment.

But a short bugle-call from headquarters ended our debate, and this was followed by a *laissez-aller* of some half a dozen dogs that went off, all eye, ear, and protruding tongue, right into the cover-plot. Some of the Jägers, and no doubt such as constituted the best shots, stepped out of the circle a few paces in advance at that same time.

Old Zieten, with his fierce hussar attendant, could not have issued from the wood more suddenly than a huge boar, with his bristly staff, now did from the cover into which the eager hounds had dashed. Nor could any of your boasted generals cast a more knowing glance, or present a more defiant mien, than this porcine chief did, as, with mane erect, the circling foe was surveyed, and then, with a clashing of tusks only to be remembered with a shudder, on he came.

I have no clear recollection as to what immediately followed, but perfectly remembered how those eyes of fire bore point-blank towards me, and what a rattle of rifles, din of shouts, dog yells, and indescribable sounds burst forth at the very moment I made for my fugleman's support, and in my flurry tumbled over that tree-stump, and became immersed in a snow-drift. This served so to complete my bewilderment that, although unmistakable splashings of the brute's very foam and blood were on my shoes when I got up, I could not for my life say in which direction or how he passed me; but, as there was an impression that I had actually been under dental treatment, I felt down both my sides, and examined both legs, inside as well as out, for the satisfaction of those who pressed about me, as well as to clear the matter in my own mind, for, without feeling hurt, they made me fancy that I must have had a slight rip somewhere.

A drop more "kimmel" accomplished the rest, and, as the battue was pretty well over, I went to the spot where this fearful monster lay stretched on the frozen ground, with



A MODERN BOAR HUNT IN THE FOREST OF BAVARIA.—SEE PAGE 38.

blood oozing from some half-dozen bullet-holes and a gash in the throat, from which the last of the fierce tide of life was slowly ebbing.

The woodman with his axe must have been equally taken aback, for, in place of striking at the right moment, he never struck at all, but flung his formidable weapon after his flying foe, and for aught it had done he might have flung it aside altogether. I heard this as they were laughing at him; whilst I, whose performance had been most laughable of all, seemed to stand well in general estimation as one who had

been simply knocked over by the boar, and escaped his tusk miraculously.

They counted eighteen head, two boars of the first order, which were to be dispatched forthwith to King Ludwig at Munich; three of the second class, four sows, and the rest young fry under six months old.

The main trophy was the very brute that had figured as commander-in-chief and led the charge so desperately in the direction I occupied, and certainly as he there lay dappling his snowy resting-place with blood, a more hideous or a more

fiend-like object never met my eyes. The head, from snout to ear-point, could not have been much under two feet in length, and in one of the ears was a bullet-hole of long standing to settle the point of his being an old campaigner. Indeed the forest *frères* recognized him as a former acquaintance, who had run the gauntlet, and probably expected to do so here again; but wiser heads get wrong in their calculations, and men fall under them as well as hogs. For the rest, the large main bristles were nearly eight inches long, tusks about seven, and his hoofs almost as strong as a donkey's. Yet there was nothing like the fleshy character of the hog race as we know it, and, with ample framework for sustaining a quarter of a ton, I very much doubt if the entire weight of this fine specimen of the wild hog reached two hundred pounds.

